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ABSTRACT

This pamphlet is designed as a construct to be used as a tool for early intervention and/or teaching. This construct may be used with young students, adults, or anyone who might need help with letter identification, sounding of letters, and creating basic word units. Out of the basic components of linguistics (phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax), it is the phonological component (classification and articulation) that this construct places most emphasis upon. The construct is designed in a very simple way so that it may be used by any student or adult who is lacking the basic literacy skills (with very little direction). The pamphlet is divided into the following sections: The Plan; What Is Being Taught?; How to Use Construct; Word and Letter Illustrations; and What Do Other Say? (Contains 25 references.) (NKA)

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An Easy Way to Practice & Learn:

Letter Identification, Sounds of Letters, & Basic Word Units

By

Eastern A. Smith

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Purpose

This pamphlet is designed as a construct to be used as a tool for early intervention and/or teaching. This construct may be used with young students, adults or anyone who might need help with letter identification, sounding of letters, and creating basic word units.

Out of the basic components of linguistics; phonology, morphology, semantics, and syntax, it is the phonological component (classification and articulation) that this construct will place most emphasis upon.

This construct is designed in a very simplistic way so that it may be used by any student or adult, who is lacking the basic literacy skills, with very little direction.

In order not to confuse the purpose or direction of this construct, the basis for this design is promulgated at the end under "What do others say?".

The Plan

The plan is to use familiar pictures along side of each letter of the alphabet for letter-to-picture identification. The focus will be on the sound of the initial letter of each associated word.

Each letter will have at least two minimal word pairs, most will have three, following the identity word. First, the definition of "mininal pair". A minimal pair is two or more words used in contrast, differing in only one letter, in the same place i.e.; bea/t/ and bea/d/. The difference in the word is noted by its phonemic seperation "/ /". After the student catches onto the letter identification part, the use of minimal pair words shows him or her how the same letter can be used in other words without too much confusion. It is consistency that will foster memorization.

What is Being Taught?

What is being taught is letter identification, sounding of letters, and the application of turning those letters and sounds into new words through practice.

It is the opinion of the writer that this format and structure is a better way for the initial introduction of the alphabet. The student will learn the alphabet through visual association. This structure refutes the notion of teaching students the alphabet in isolation or through rhythmic song.

This construct teaches functional use, examination, and retention of the alphabet from A to Z, all at the same time. The one downside to this construct is the need of visual acuity.

The oral schematics found on the front and within the pamphlet gives an accurate depiction of the tongues position within the mouth of most early sounds of the alphabet during speaking. This is just another tool that an instructor may use to get their student to practice feeling where their tongue is and where it should be (correct placement) during articulation of words.

How to Use Construct

1. Establish the need to start at this level through formal and informal test or evaluation of existing test or classroom observation.

2. Establish students acuity and aural abilities.

3. You can start with any one of the alphabets or if you need to establish an order from A to Z then it is suggested that you start with the letter A and go in sequential order.

4. You may use this construct for one on one remediation or in group with the use of an over head projector.

5. Point at an object associated with a letter and ask the student " what is this? " After receiving a correct answer then point to the initial letter of the word that describes that object and say " This is (the letter) for (object). Then After doing this two to three times then point to the letter that you are working with and say this is (let student answer only) for (say and point to object). By doing this you are removing your voice and answer as the stimulus and you are seeing if memorization has taken over.

6. After letters have been learned in totality, which we suggest, then you can move onto segmentation of minimal pair words. What do I mean by segmentation? I'm glad you asked. Just because the words *bat, cat, and sat* are there does not mean that you still won't have to break the word down initially, for most cases. Use the letter A and T together first for fluency. Once this combination is mastered then you can start to use the (c-v-c) combination and minimal pairs. Defining words as you go on is a must.

7. As you go through this process use the oral schematic to show your student where their tongue placement should be at the onset of the pronunciation of the words that you are working with. Also have the student show you how they are using their articulators to produce the letter, sound, and/or word in question. That's the fun part.

8. As simple as this construct might seem it will still take time and an effort of consistency on your part as instructor.

Try and make your own word in this space.

/A/pple - /A/nd , /A/nt , /A/ne _ _ _ _ _

/B/ird - /B/ag , /B/am , /B/at _ _ _ _ _

/C/at - /C/ab , /C/an , /C/ap _ _ _ _ _

/D/og - /D/id , /D/ig , /D/ip _ _ _ _ _

/E/gg - /E/lf , /E/lk , /E/ld _ _ _ _ _

/F/ish - /F/ig , /F/in , /F/it _ _ _ _ _

/G/oat - /G/et , /G/ot , /G/ut _ _ _ _ _

/H/at - /H/it , /H/ot , /H/ut _ _ _ _ _

/I/nk - /I/f , /I/n , /I/s , /I/t _ _ _ _ _

/J/ar - /J/ig , /J/og , /J/ug _ _ _ _ _

/k/ey - /K/id , /K/im , /K/it _ _ _ _ _

Try and make your own word in this space.

/L/ip - /L/et , /L/it , /L/ot _ _ _ _ _

/M/oon- /M/at , /M/et , /M/ot _ _ _ _ _

/N/ail - /N/et , /N/ot , /N/ut _ _ _ _ _

/O/ld - /O/af , /O/ak , /O/at _ _ _ _ _

/P/en - /P/et , /P/it , /P/ot _ _ _ _ _

/Q/ueen- /Q/uick , /Q/uack _ _ _ _ _

/R/ing - /R/at , /R/ot , /R/ut _ _ _ _ _

/S/un - /S/at , /S/et , /S/it _ _ _ _ _

/T/eeth - /T/ap , /T/ip , /T/op _ _ _ _ _

/U/mbrella - b/u/n , f/u/n , r/u/n _ _ _ _ _

/V/est - /V/an , /V/in , /V/on _ _ _ _ _

/W/ater - /W/et , /W/it , /W/ot _ _ _ _ _

Try and make your own word in this space.

/X/-ray - /X/ero (z), /X/eno (z) _ _ _ _ _

/Y/ell - /Y/ah , /Y/ak , /Y/ap _ _ _ _ _

/Z/ebra - /Z/ip , /Z/ig , /Z/it _ _ _ _ _

Popular digraphs used in English:

/Ch/urch- /Ch/amp , /Ch/imp _ _ _ _ _

/Sh/oe - /Sh/ade , /Sh/ape _ _ _ _ _

/Th/umb - /Th/ank , /Th/ink _ _ _ _ _

What Do Others Say?

(References)

1. "There is a strong connection between the development a child undergoes early in life and the level of success that the child will experience later in life. A child's knowledge of the alphabet in kindergarten is one of the most significant predictors of what that child's tenth grade reading ability will be". President George W. Bush. Good Start, Good Smart: The Bush Administrations early Childhood Initiative. Http://whitehouse.gov/infocus/earlychildhood/sect2.html, January 10, 2003
2. With pre-school children, it is best to first describe the letters of the alphabet with the use of pictures. Marino, Rolando. Http://www.pacificnet.net/~cmoore/alphabet/html, January 18, 2003.
3. Letter identification of the alphabet is better learned through the use of caricatures. This eliminates having to learn a sequence or song to recall a particular letter. Gregorich, Barbara. (2001) Beginning Sounds of Various Caricatures. Michigan; School Zone Publishing Co.
4. By using a picture book daily with the letters from A to Z, students will learn the names and sounds faster. Learning Links. Big Aa-Zz Sound Cards. Http://www.ezlearninglinks.com/bigazbook.html, January 18, 2003.
5. Using letters as part of objects makes for an excellent learning tool at home and the classroom. This kind of learning tool is recommended for children ages 21/2 and up. Hausman, Gisela and Pardillo, Ozzie. The Associative Alphabet Every child Will Remember. Http://www.preschooleducation.com/brl shtml, January 18, 2003.
6. Each and every word associated with a cartoon is a vocabulary learning tool in the form of a mnemonic device. A mnemonic (Neh Mon ik) is a fancy word which simply means "assisting the memory". A visual mnemonic is a picture in your mind. Burchers, S., Burchers, M., and Burchers, B. (1998) Vocabulary Cartoons. Punta Gorda, FL.; New Monic Books Publishing.
7. Learning letters of the alphabet and phonics can be accomplished by singing a word with emphasis on a letter by pointing to that letter drawn on a black or white board. Then by asking the student to write that letter in the air with their fingers. Unknown Visitor-Learning Letters. Http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/earlyyears/learningletters.htm, January 18, 2003.
8. The use of pictures as a language connector is not only used in a one-to-one system. It has been used as a correspondence between items in the picture and the words of an entire message. This is called pictographic writing. However, even in pictographic writing, the drawing generally closely resembles the thing it represents. It is easier to think up pictorial representations of concrete objects than abstract ideas. Mackay, Ian. (1987) Phonetics: The Science of Speech Production. Boston, MA; Allyn and Bacon.
9. Development of vocabulary may be presented through semantic information included in the grouping of vocabulary words and by contrasting features such as minimal pairs and antonym pairs. Kissel, Joan s. Vocabulary As You Need It; Vocabulary Grouped by Linguistic Rule Structure. Http://www.clau.uiuc.edu/fulltext/c101558/c101558.html, January 10, 2003
10. It is well recommended for developing sound-symbol recognition in your classroom that you make a large alphabet chart; for each letter and place a picture that begins with that sound next to it. Each day have the children recite in unison; A-apple, B-bicycle, C-Cat etc...The children will say each word twice. This will give them an anchor sound and words for future study. Advisory Committee. Embracing The Child. Www.embracingthechild.com/letters.html, January 10, 2003.
11. One of the simplest explanations of how children learn the meanings of their first words is through association. Association theory was first seen with Pavlov's famous experiment which caused a dog to salivate when presented with meat and the sound of a bell. When the meat aspect was removed and only the bell remained as the stimulus, the dog still salivated. Many children's early words have concrete referents and could be learned through association. Gleason, Jean B. (1993) The Development of Language. New York; MacMillan Publishing Co.
12. There is a direct correlation between looking at a picture and learning the sound of the beginning letter of it's associated word. Stuart, Dent (2002) Webster's First Phonics. New York; BCL Press.
13. With children that need extra instruction in letter/sound identification, "the use of contemporary phonics is highly recommended." This type of phonics instruction integrates into the total reading program. Its focus is on reading print rather than learning rules. This includes teaching onset and rime. Word walls, alphabet books, flip books, magnetic letters, etc.. all assist children in developing letter and sound relationships. Michigan Literacy Progress Profile. Letter/Sound Identification. Http://www.ferris.edu/htmls/colleges/education/centers/MLLP/1si.htm.
14. Learning words and language starts at learning the sound system. Knowing the sound system of a language includes knowing which sounds may start a word, end a word, and follow each other. Knowing a language is knowing how to relate sounds and meanings. Franklin, V. and Rodman, R. (1993) An Introduction to Language. Texas; Harcourt Brace Javanovich College.

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15. Rhyming short vowel word families introduces the concept of categorization. Simple words with (c-v-c) combinations demonstrates an alphabetic nature of the spelling system. This also helps establish foundational knowledge against other vowel patterns and develops an automaticity in (c-v-c) word recognition. University of Utah-reading Clinic.
Http://www.gse.utah.edu/edst/uurc/intervention/IWordStudy.htm, January 10, 2003.
16. Each language has specific speech sounds or phonemes. A phoneme is the smallest meaningful unit of speech. Phonemes are written between slashes to distinguish them from other sounds. Traditional phonemic classification is based on tongue placement., movement of articulators; tongue, lips, teeth, and type of air release. Shames, George H. and Wiig, Elizabeth H. (1990) Human Communication Disorders. New York; MacMillan Publishing Co.
17. Fifth grade students identified as non-readers through assessment test like the DRA, with limited vocabulary, nonexistent phonics, and problems identifying upper and lower case letters do benefit from using caricature/letter references and segmentation task. i.e. Take the word "Lend", remove the "L" then ask a student to identify the word "end". Then ask student to pronounce the "L" by itself. Then have the student migrate the "L" sound onto the word "end". The manipulation of basic one syllable words work well for letter identification and vocabulary building. Tranumn, Brenda. Dekalb County School Systems, Stone Mountain Elementary, February 4, 2003.
18. Learning to read means learning to write. Writing involves putting symbols onto paper. At the early ages, children use picture writing and scribbling to communicate their ideas onto paper. When they discover that their writing is getting attention and a response from the viewer, they then attempt to connect random letters together. "As they learn to connect the sounds of language with the letter symbols, they use beginning consonants to represent words." Dodge, D. T. and Bickart, T.S. (1998)
Preschool For Parent: What Every parent Needs to Know About Preschool. Naperville, IL; Source Books Inc.
19. Children need to get a feel for each individual phoneme. Each phoneme should be introduced one at a time. A good introductory strategy is to use meaningful names. Meaningful names provide a familiar image of a sound. After introduction of a phoneme, have a student to stretch it, examine it, and practice it by making the sound in their mouth. Phoneme Awareness. Http://auburn.edu/~murraba/phon.html, January 18, 2003.
20. The mouth is a very important part in the process of speech and production of sound. Inside the mouth is called a vocal tract. The vocal tract is oval for the most part. However, the tongue is a mobile muscle that can go (back and forth) and (up and down). It is very important to have correct tongue placement in the developmental stages of building vocabulary. Fry, D. B. (1979) The Physics of Speech.
New York; Press Syndicate.
21. In a rehabilitation model for patients with Aphasia (non-fluent), that is to say; difficulty with word retrieval, experts have said that the most effective way to elicit memory retrieval is through practicing repetition and initial phoneme/initial syllable techniques. Pietro, M.J. And Goldfarb, R. (1995)
Target; Generating Effective Treatment for Aphasia. Florida; The Speech Bin.
22. "Learning to orally produce an alternate form of language is not principally a function of cognitive analysis, thereby not ideally learned from a rule based instruction and correction. Rather, it comes with exposure, comfort level, motivation, familiarity and practice in real communicative contexts."
Delpit, Lisa. (1995) Other Peoples Children; Cultural Conflict in the Classroom.New York,; The New Press.
23. Children understand names for people and things (objects) before they understand action or relational words. Comprehension of these words for people and objects, at first, is limited to situations where the referent is present and then memory takes over. James, Sharon L. (1990) Normal Language Acquisition. Boston, MA; College-Hill Press.
24. Improving pronunciation, improves spelling. Become familiar with as many sounds as possible. Repetition is one of the most effective ways to make a word your own. Going over the word can help you master it's meaning as well as it's pronunciation and usage. Dr. Rozakis, Phd., Laurie E. (2002) Vocabulary For Dummies. New York; CDG Books.
25. Vocabulary acquisition becomes increasingly important as language learning progresses. It is not the sole responsibility of the English Teacher. Everyone must do their part. Vorster, Jan. Department of Psychology, University of Natal Durban. Http://www.und.ac.za/und/ling/archive/vorc-01.html, January 10, 2003

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